

Be of Good Courage

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 04 April 2010

[0:00] After the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, it came to pass that the Lord spake unto!

even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses, from the wilderness and this Lebanon, even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea, toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast.

There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Be strong and of a good courage, for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I swear unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee.

Turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper with us soever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein, day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein.

[1:41] For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee, be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed.

For the Lord thy God is with thee, with us soever thou goest. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word and its truth. Help us, Lord, to apply it to our hearts and lives.

Dear Lord, help us to understand it and take it in, that we might obey it and follow it. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. It's telling us there about being of good courage.

Particularly verse 9. Have I not commanded thee, be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed. For the Lord thy God is with thee, with us soever thou goest.

We call to be, even in our day, every one of you here today, as those that have trusted Christ, or I trust will trust Christ, that you will know what it is to be a courageous Christian.

[2:46] People with courage, people who will be strong, will have courage, who will not fear. Why? Because God is with you. For God is with us.

That is our source of courage. And people don't fear God enough. They don't fear the Lord enough. They fear everything else too much and they neglect to fear God.

But as God's people, we can rise up and be strong. and very courageous. We can overcome the fear of man, the fear of things about us, and have a faith that goes through the battles and finds courage.

So what is courage? What is courage? It's the strength to go beyond our own limits. It's the strength to go through the barriers and obstacles of life, and all the things that will set themselves against us. Moral courage is the courage to do right. It's for us as God's people, moral courage is that fibre, it's that stamina, it's that trusting of Christ and that knowing of His will and doing of it.

[3:49] The courage of your convictions. And that's lacking today. The courage of conviction. Biblical courage. You could define it as a trust in the Lord and a willingness to obey Him and do that which is right, whatever the cost.

Have you got this courage? It's the courage that comes from Christ, from faith. The courage to obey God. The courage to face crisis. The courage to overcome fear and doubt.

You know that there's many obstacles, young people especially, you're besieged by so many obstacles and distractions and influences that, as all of us face, that are all around us, trying to tug us away from God, trying to distract us, trying to tear us away from that which really counts.

Here's a quote. Where are the young men and women of this generation who will hold their lives cheap and be faithful even unto death? Where are those who will lose their lives for Christ's sake,

fleeing them away for love of Him?

Where are those who will live dangerously and be reckless in His service? Where are those who love Him and the souls of men more than of their own life or their comfort or reputations?

[5:04] Where are the men who say no to self, who take up Christ's cross to bear it after Him, who are willing to be nailed to it in college, in school, in office, in home, in mission field, who are willing, if need be, to bleed, to suffer and to die for it?

Where are the men, the women of courage? He goes on, where are the adventurers, the explorers, the buccaneers for God, who count one human soul of far greater value than the rise or fall of an empire?

Where are the men who are willing to paint the price of vision? Where are the men of prayer? Where are God's men in this day of God's power? It's so needful for courage in this day when there's so much that would tear you away from God's way.

A man called Captain Ridenbacker said this, courage is doing what you are afraid to do. It's not that there's the absence of fear, it's when we're fearful but we press through.

Where there is no fear, there is no courage. And we know that, I know for folk that do open air preaching or do something publicly for Christ, where there's opposition, where there's ridicule, where there's mockery, where there's shame, where there's embarrassment.

[6:24] Humanly speaking, it's going through that pain barrier, that discomfort barrier. It's stepping outside the comfort zone. It takes courage. And God wants you to have that courage, young men, young women, everyone here tonight, to have that kind of courage.

And when we think of courage, it starts really with faith. The courage that we're talking about here is the courage that springs from faith. In Revelation 21.8, we see the opposite of faith.

It's the fearful. It says there, but the fearful, the unbelieving, and the abominable, the murderers, the whorehungers, the sorcerers, the idolaters, all liars, shall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

It's talking about the fearful. God doesn't want us to be fearful, but faithful. He wants us to have faith. And our strength and our courage, it springs from faith. Faith is that starting point.

Are you one of the fearful, or one of the faithful? In Proverbs 29.25, it says, The fear of the Lord bringeth a snare, but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be saved.

[7:35] We don't want to have the fear of man that tears us away from God's will for our lives. We want to have courage. The courage of conviction.

The courage to stand. And I know I've mentioned this in part before. That song that we just sang, Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus. As I've mentioned, I know before, there was a school assembly, and that was sung, and I stood next to a friend that I was talking to, a Muslim, and I was, not proud in a fleshly sense, but I was glad to be singing the words of that song.

Even though, and you can imagine, in a secular kind of school assembly, as it was in England, as much as it was a tradition, most people would have been whispering it, or mouthing the words, as much as the one at the front, the principal, or the teachers might have been singing it, in some fashion, that the children, by and large, were quiet, when the song was being sung.

But I was glad to take those words in my hand, and to sing that song, Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross, even though there might have been a degree of embarrassment, a degree of people scorning, such a song, and the truth of it, and especially the Muslim friend, of whom I was seeking to witness to, it made me stronger to think, well I can stand up for Jesus, even though others may not, even though some may discount his name, or devalue his person, as much as they may regard even his name.

And yet, we know, it's a time and a place, it's a day and an hour, when we need to stand, to stand up for Jesus, to have courage. And he gives us that courage, he gives us that boldness, he gives us that bold message.

[9:18] As we know, the Proverbs says, the fear of man brings a snare, it's like a trap, it's something that will drag us down, and hold us back. But, who so putteth his trust in the Lord, shall be saved.

And in Acts 4.13, we read of the early church, it says there, they saw, in verse 13 of Acts 4, the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned, unlearned, and ignorant men, they marveled, they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

Even though these men, humanly speaking, they were unlearned, ignorant, they're just everyday, common variety, average Joe off the street, kind of Peter and John, there was something that was special about them, there was something that was shining out of their eyes, and beaming out of their lives, was that life of Christ.

It was that they had been with Jesus. They took knowledge of them, the people marveled. How did they get that boldness? How did they get that? They had been with Jesus.

They had been with the Lord. And they had sought God for it. As we read in Acts 4.29, the church of God said, Now Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants boldness, that with all boldness they may speak thy word.

[10:42] Pray for whoever is preaching. Pray for each one of you, as you witness, as you minister, as you share the gospel, as you personally witness, as you publicly witness, that you'll have boldness, that you'll have courage to speak the word of God.

Young people in the schoolyard, if you're a Christian, God will give you the courage to stand up for your convictions, to stand up for Christ, to say, I am a Christian, and I love Jesus, and I want to introduce Him to you.

Ask Him for that boldness, as the early church did. And we can have that boldness. Why? Because He is with you. He is with you, as He says, as He promises at the end of Matthew 28, as He gave the Great Commission to those there, and says, Go ye, teach all nations, I have commanded you, and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

He says, I am going to be with you when you go soul winning. That's a comfort, isn't it? To know that, as much as there might be some big burly guys about to knock us out for sex, or, you know, there might be opposition and ridicule from some that look like they could really do us some injury, the Lord is with you, and you need not fear what man can do unto you.

In Proverbs 28, it says, The wicked flee when no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold as a lion. Bold as a lion. I'm looking forward to next weekend when we have a man ministering to us who's accustomed to speaking on the streets of Adelaide.

[12:19] And that's going to be an encouragement to you, I'm sure. God grant us that courage. Every one of us, we need more courage, we need more boldness, even when it may mean facing danger, even if we are in the minority.

And not that I'm any great example of that. But brothers and sisters, that each one of you might be encouraged to have courage. Encourage yourself in the Lord. Encourage that courage.

Ryle said, an old time preacher, zeal in Christianity is a burning desire to please God, to do His will, and to advance His glory in the world in every possible way.

Zeal in Christianity is a missing element, a missing component, that burning desire to please God, to do His will. An unrelenting zeal, a burning for God, a standing for right.

Even though the crowd may not be here, we can stand with Christ. That's what matters. It's with Christ. And for Christ. As the three Hebrew children, as they were facing that great challenge, as the whole community was bowing in unison at the king's command, as the rock band struck up the notes, and everything was there, and this was the dumb thing to do, to bow down to the king's idol, the three Hebrew children stood strong.

[13:44] They stood tall whilst everyone else bowed. They didn't even pretend to bow to the idol. They didn't even pretend to worship the idol. Maybe they could have done.

Some could argue pragmatically, maybe there's a way they could have bowed their hand and prayed to the Lord or something, or made some kind of symbol of reverence that they weren't directing at the idol, or, you know, putting on some kind of a veneer of obeying whilst not really praying to the idol as such.

Some could argue maybe there's ways they could have got out of it. But no, they weren't about to compromise, to dilly-dally, to pussyfoot around. They stood strong with courage.

They stood and they overcame with God's help. Faith made the difference. Faith shines through. Faith will seize that courage.

Faith will realise that courage in the inner man. And courage shows in faithfulness. In faithfulness. Hebrews 13, verses 5 to 6.

[14:47] You might like to flick there. Faith and faithfulness. Courage. Have courage. It starts with faith and we see it demonstrated in faithfulness.

Hebrews 13, from verse 5. Let your conversation or your way of life be without covetousness and be content with such things as you have. For he hath said, I will never, never leave thee nor forsake thee.

So that you may boldly say, The Lord is my helper and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. The Lord is my helper. I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

We can boldly say that. Boldly. Notice that word boldly. There's courage there. We can be bold. We can be courageous. Why? Because he is our helper.

He is our helper. He is present. He is with us. So do not be afraid, even if it may mean for you to stand alone.

[16:00] Even though it may mean for you to stand relatively alone. God will bless your faithfulness for that. It takes courage. It takes courage in many situations even to be faithful in church going.

To be faithful in reading a Bible. To be faithful in praying. To be faithful in that personal walk with the Lord. That devotional life.

God give us the courage to be strong when the crowd, when the peer pressure might be so overwhelming. When there are mates around us, the scarce of them that will be Christian or consider Christian truth.

You can be stand. You can be strong no matter what the crowd does. Even your brothers and sisters, your family, maybe scarcely Christian, you can still be strong.

You can choose to stand for God even against the crowd, against the flow. To be strong, to be pure. Instead of following the vain pursuits of the crowd.

[17:07] Hebrews 11.25 It says that Moses Hebrews 11.25 Moses chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

Sure, sin is pleasurable. There's pleasure in sin but the Bible says it's tempering, it's passing. Moses had the strength of character to instead to stand with God's people, to stand and take the reproach of Christ.

In other words, the mockery for Christ. To take the shame and reproach, the embarrassment of Christ. He considered that a far greater riches than the treasure of Egypt.

You can imagine Moses was in a prime position to have affluence and everything to hand of his day in a senior position with everything at his disposal that he could just snap his fingers or ring a bell or clap his hands and servants would wait on him and give him all that he could desire.

You can imagine in the position that he had in the nation of his day. But he chose rather the reproach of Christ than the treasures of Egypt.

[18:26] Joseph too. He had courage. In that situation where Potiphar's wife was tempting him, he declared, how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

And he got out of there quick smart. He hearkened not unto her. It could have been easy for him to get away with something untoward or just to deliberate or choose to do something out of sight of others and maybe get away with it.

But instead he chose to flee. He chose to run from that which was going to tempt him and do him damage and harm his testimony and bring shame on God's people.

He had courage. Joseph had courage. It takes courage for young women to dress modestly when their friends do not. to pursue godliness and adorn herself with good works like it says in 1 Timothy 2.

It takes courage for young men and young women to not fire the sensual crowd and the hurtful and destructive ways that are often embodied in the world's music.

[19:40] At times that can be just one example of the influence where there's impurity and uncleanness. You can choose instead to be true to your convictions, to be true to the God of the Bible, to his truth, to

follow Christ completely and fully, uncompromisingly.

So faith, faithfulness, overcoming faith, overcoming faith. Courage is faith that goes through the pain barrier.

Courage is something that goes through the storms, through the adversity, through the times of opposition and disappointments.

It might be when there's sickness or sadness or sorrow, the loss of loved ones, when things fall apart all around us, when humanly speaking, there's things that make us despair.

They're even more so the times for courage that we can press through. I find that spiritual strength. It may not be that we might feel courage. It may not be that we might feel victory, but yet, it's here for us.

[20:51] It's promised in his word to you. And we can be like Paul. In the midst of a storm, he declared in Acts 27, verse 25, to the passengers of the boat, as it was lashed by the waves and looked like it was about to be broken to bits, he says, Sirs, be of good cheer, for I believe God that it shall be even as it was told me.

He was assured that God would save every person, every soul on that vessel, and he said, hey, be of good cheer, for I believe God.

He had faith and he wanted to demonstrate that and impart that encouragement to those that were despairing, even that time of storm. There's another occasion of a storm, Matthew 14, 27, as the disciples were on the waters, Matthew 14, verse 27, as they were crossing over, the waves were tossing the vessel, the wind was contrary, and then they saw coming towards them, Matthew 14, verse 27, it looked like a spirit, some kind of apparition to their eyes, some blurred figure walking across the water towards them, and they were afraid, and verse 26, it says, the disciples saw him walking on the sea, and they were troubled, saying, it is a spirit, and they cried out for fear, but straight away Jesus spake unto them, saying, be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid.

The Lord comes to them walking on the water, he brings comfort, he brings courage, he says, be of good cheer, it is I, and I'm interested to see, as it can be noted, this expression, it is I, you could say, he said, I am, I am, as we know, he says, I am the door, I am the good shepherd, I am the way, the truth, the life, I am the true vine, so many more things, he is the I am, and if we can just rest in that promise, as he says, it is I, as he says, I am, be of good cheer, take heart, be not afraid, we can have courage, we can believe God, there's so many scriptures, there's really just numbers of them we could refer to, 1 in 1 Corinthians 16, 13, it says, quit ye, or act like men, act like men, be strong, stand fast in the faith,

Psalms 31, 24, says, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, so friends tonight, there's promises here, for you, for me, to take courage, to find courage, to take heart, to strengthen our heart, all ye that hope in the Lord, he can be that strength, in that time of weakness, he can be that fortress, in that time of storm, he can be that one, he'll come, and shelter us, and protect us, like he did with Daniel, in the lion's den, as he had courage, as we see the courage, of the early church, in Acts 5, verse 20, they were instructed, as the angel released them, from the prison of that moment, in Acts 5, verse 20, the angel said, go, stand, and speak, in the temple, to the people, all the words of this life,

[24:37] I've heard there's a new video coming out, called, stand and speak, it's about open air preaching, and it's encouraging God's people, go, stand, and speak, and that's what we need to do, in verse 40, it says, after they got caught up with, by the establishment, in verse 40, of Acts 5, and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded, that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go, and they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy, to suffer shame, for his name, and daily, in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not, to teach and preach, Jesus Christ, they were instructed, they were commanded, they were beaten, to not speak in his name, and yet they did, because they had something, that they had courage, of the conviction, to declare, they cared for one thing, they lived for one thing, they were swallowed up in one thing, that one thing, was to please God, as Sir Riley said, that God

will stand up for the Lord, they care for one thing, they live for one thing, they are swallowed up in one thing, that one thing, is to please God, is that your desire tonight, to have that courage, to have that strength of character, to have that faith, that faithfulness, that overcoming faith, that will press on, that will press through, regardless of that which is about you, regardless of that which will oppose you, courage to stand, courage to stand, for principle, for truth,

Psalm 27, 14, it says, wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart, wait I say, on the Lord, he will strengthen your heart, wait on him, seek him, pray, ask God to give you that courage, ask God to strengthen your heart, ask God, if you've never been saved yet, this message is really to believe us tonight, ask him to save you, and ask him to help you live the life, to stand strong, to go with God, to press on, ask him to help you to understand the word of God, to take it, even if it's bit by bit, piece by piece, verse by verse, to understand the significance, to feed on it, to chew on it, to deliberate, to meditate upon it, and essentially to obey it, to take its drink, and make it live in your life, learn courage from others, recall the faithfulness of God in your life, stand on the promises of God, Ryle said this, do not care for the praise or the frown of man, there is only one thing worth caring for, and that is the praise of God, there is only one question worth asking about our actions, how will they appear in the day of judgment, it's a telling thought isn't it, of our actions, how will they appear in the day of judgment, it takes courage to be a Christian, it takes courage to repent, to commit to Christ, to be steadfast, and courage is found in Christ, it's found in faith in Christ, he is the source of our courage, the helper in our weakness, the one who is our helper, the one who is our fortress, Joshua 1 verse 9, have I not commanded thee, be strong and of a good courage, be not afraid, neither, be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee, that's our source of courage, withersoever thou goest, wherever you go, he's there with you, he's there with you, alongside you, within you, without you, God is with us, and lastly, John 16, 33, the Lord promises to you, he says, these things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace, in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, be of good cheer, take heart today, he says, take courage, have courage, I have overcome the world, Thank you.